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Pulpit

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Preaching

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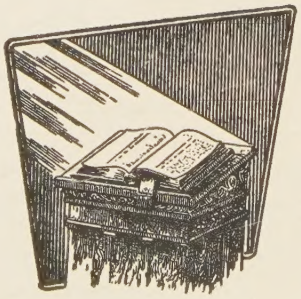

EDITORIAL COMMENTS

This month's emphasis is "The Christian's Witness," sermons on the evangelical ministry of the Church and the beliefs that motivate discipleship.

The August themes will be "Labor Sunday" and "Laymen at Work." The September themes will be "Building on Spiritual Foundations" and "Eyes toward the Cross." The October themes will be "The Lord's Treasury" and "Modern Pilgrims Give Thanks." The November theme will be "The Deeper Meanings of Christmas."

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BOOKS FOR PULPIT PREACHING

Pictorial Profile of the Holy Land by J. E. Holley and Carolyn F. Holley is a large book containing 248 photographs and maps. The photography is excellent, and imaginative and vivid in its presentation of the people and places of the biblical communities and countryside. This volume will add new dimensions to Bible reading and study. (Fleming H. Revell Co., $5.95.)

Halford E. Luccock's **Preaching Values in the Epistles of Paul** promises to be a series of extraordinary homiletic value. Volume I on Romans and First Corinthians, now available, contains 142 one to two-page commentaries and topical expositions on individual verses. The insights, suggestive and pertinent ideas, and razor-sharp phraseology are similar to the many other books which have made Luccock one of America's most frequently quoted churchmen. (Harper & Brothers, 220 pp., $3.50.)

Human Spirit and Holy Spirit by Arnold B. Come of the San Francisco Theological Seminary is a praiseworthy and valuable study of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit which approaches "the doctrine of God through a doctrine of man," affirming that "man's knowledge of God must not be developed in isolation from man's knowledge of himself and man's knowledge of himself in Christ must not be isolated from man's knowledge of himself apart from Christ." (Westminster Press, 208 pp., $4.)

Love Is Something You Do by Frederick B. Speakman deserves a wide reading by pastors for both its spiritual emphases and its engaging and stimulating manner of writing. One is heartened by reading a book such as this which presents durable Christian truths in a creative and vigorous fashion. Among the seventeen sermons are "Why God Is in Trouble with You," "Lounging on the Altar" and "Does God Read His Children's Mail?" (Fleming H. Revell Co., 154 pp., $2.50.)

Specifically to Youth is a collection of twenty sermons which Harry H. Kruener, dean of the chapel, has preached to Denison University students. Many of the sermons are centered in student problems and interests, but all of them are relevant to the theological curiosity and need for spiritual growth of the entire Christian community. The author writes with clarity and candor. His sermons are sophisticated enough to make a vigorous appeal to the mind and warm enough to appeal to the heart.

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Pulpit Preaching

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CHANCE AT LIFE!

Everett W. Palmer, Fisrt Methodist Church, Glendale, Calif.

I Came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.—John 10:10.

While I was making a hospital call, nurse came up to me hurriedly. There's a patient down the hall," e said, "who wants a minister. He's bad shape." In the room were a ctor and several nurses; on the bed white mound of jerking, quivering sh and broken bones. You had to ess it was a man.

He was a stranger far from home. hile driving down the highway a r coming toward him at high speed erved over the double line and hit m head-on. He had been expected die momentarily, but somehow rough the darkness and waves of in that sent his screams down the rridor, he had clung to life, fiercely, naciously, desperately.

Standing at his bedside, I spoke to m quietly. In a moment his stricken es were upon me. In another mo- nt his left hand, the only part of s body he could move, reached out. knew what he wanted. Taking that nd, I tried to put it in God's hand. fter the prayer I could tell he nted to say something. I leaned er and he whispered, "Thanks, God d I are going to fool them."

And they did. He lived when they re sure he would die; got up on utches when they were sure he uld never stand again. One day veral years later a car drove up to r house and parked. Someone got t and walked to our door. There he as, walking without crutches or a ne. "Well," he said, "here I am. God helped me hang on," he declared. "God hepled me all the way. Here I am, alive and walking."

What a passion he had for life. That is a never-ending miracle! Its reign extends from amoeba to the cattle of a thousand hills, from the youngest infant to the oldest man. It is taut and vibrant within each of us this moment.

We feel it, of course, in the sheer primeval physical drive of animal instinct. But for us human beings it is more than that, much more.

Ours is the exacting, exciting adventure of being a citizen of two worlds at one and the same time. One is the world of physical needs and fulfillment. This is the world we share with every creature from polywogs to elephants. The other is the world of spiritual needs and fulfillment. This is the world of such amazing potential as self-awareness and God-awareness, hunger for truth, beauty and holiness. As human beings we sense a realm of existence above that of the physical. Hence, as human beings our passion for life is more than concern merely for physical survival. It is the business of our soul, too. It reaches from time to eternity, from earth to heaven. It serves all that would make us truly man.

This is the concern which prompted Jesus Christ to say, "I am come that they might have life, and have it abundantly." This is the concern which the Church exists to serve. This

is the task to which Christian education gives itself. This is the throbbing heart of the challenge which meets us when as parents and children, teachers and fellow church members, the appeal of Rally Day calls us to re-dedicate ourselves to the aims and responsibilities of Christian education.

I

At the outset, let us look again at the source of our confidence and the reason for our effort. On Rally Day we celebrate the liberating, life-giving power of Jesus Christ. Leaders and workers in Christian education have many differences of opinion respecting both the philosophy and techniques of education. But they stand united in fundamental assurance that in and through Jesus Christ men find most completely and redemptively "a chance at life."

We want to be more than just alive. Since we are human beings, mere physical existence does not satisfy us. We feel the stirring of pent-up powers, a yearning to be more than what we are. We know the lure of perfection, the tug of that which is above and beyond.

Harry Emerson Fosdick once told of the first time he saw Sir Henry Irving play in Shakespeare. It was one of the supreme experiences of his young manhood, Fosdick said, an experience he would travel far to repeat.

Then with his unsurpassed knowledge of biography he turned to Ellen Terry's account of that incomparable Shakespearean actor, where she wrote: "Henry Irving at first had everything against him as an actor. He could not speak, he could not walk, he could not **look.** He wanted to do things in a part, and he could not do them. His amazing power was imprisoned, and only after long and weary years did he succeed in setting it free."

In a sense that is every human being's predicament and promise, yours and mine. We feel the push of imprisoned power, the pull from that which is above. We want release, fulfillment, "a chance at life."

How do we get it? To blunder here is to invite destruction.

Some time ago I arrived in a large city late at night. As I got out of the car three young women, well dressed and looking like college girls, were coming down the street, cigarettes in hand, swaying and staggering, obviously drunk. To a man nearby they shouted an obscenity. They were drunk enough to have neither manners nor morals. Why were they thus? Pitifully enough, each wanted "a chance at life." Each had a gnawing discontent, a sense of incompleteness, a nameless yearning. Each was trying to find release, fulfillment, life that is more than just being alive.

All vice, "sins of the flesh" so-called, is but the tawdry and shameful end of what began, in each case, as a brave and beautiful adventure, the quest for the "chance at life."

Here is a professional man, prosperous and widely known. He had been reared in the squalor of a city slum near a great downtown city church. The influence of that church reached out into his home. It gave his father and mother a sense of worth and self-respect. It helped them become clean, industrious, thrifty. As a lad of twelve he joined that church. Through the inspiration and supporting strength derived from it he got an education, influential friends. In that city he has risen to wealth and prestige. He lives in a beautiful suburban estate. His children are sent to the best schools. To every appearance he is a poor boy's dream come true. He is a Mr. Big. But in his heart he hates himself and lives in shame. The papers will report his death not far hence, but the real man died years ago. As a lad he felt the divine prompting from within and without. He bravely set forth to get "a change at life." But in seeking it he turned in the wrong direction. He neglected the church

hich gave him his start; he ignored e God to whom he owed everything. What a mountain of misery we ake when in our quest for life we rn in the wrong direction!

At this point of basic need Jesus hrist is the answer we can trust. hrough Him we find the mighty es," an open door to what we want ost—"a chance at life."

II

But to make such an affirmation is t enough. See how it can happen.

Do we want "a chance at life"? hen, says Jesus, "Love God with all ur heart, mind, soul, and strength. rget yourself. Go all out for God d what He wants done in the orld."

O'Henry, in one of his classic short ories, tells of an artist who, having en reared in the West, returned to aint some scenes of ranch life. One ay he completed a large painting, e-size, depicting a round-up. Hav- g received the comments and eval- ation of the ranch hands, he took it another jury. He carried it to the rral, stood it up, and then had an d cut-out pony brought from the arn to view it. The painting was so alistic that when the old horse ewed the familiar scene his head me up, his nostrils flared, and he awed with eagerness. Then with a ld whinney of glad recognition the d veteran of many a round-up raced ward the picture and plunged rough it.

In a sense this bespeaks the vigor- us, glad - hearted, self - forgetting bandon for God and His work in the orld which gives us "a chance at fe."

Word of a man going into the min- try who once was a miner catches y interest. Some years ago a young iner was trapped by a cave-in. He as pinned and partially crushed by ns of rock. Miraculously he was not illed. During intermittent periods of onsciousness, as he listened to the istant sounds of rescue workers dig- ging their way toward him, he thought about his life to date. He knew he had missed the kind of life he had been born to live. He had been merely living as a body, not as a man with a soul destined for God. He knew the way to life, but he had been careless. During those long, dark hours of waiting he was converted. He turned from himself to God. There on the edge of death he entered new life. He vowed that if he got a second chance to live he would be a whole-hearted Christian, he would go all-out for God and what God wanted done in the world, even become a minister if that were what God wanted of him.

The rescue workers did arrive in time. He spent sixteen months in a hospital. When discharged he had lost one arm, but he had gained a firm purpose. God, he was convinced, wanted him for a minister. Though man-grown, he started in school as a freshman in high school. He worked his way through high school, through four years of college, then through three years of seminary. Then the day came when he preached his first sermon in his first charge, a Baptist church in western Ohio. That was when I read of him in the papers.

I have never met the man. But knowing something of what he has done and is doing I can say that he's found life, spelled with capital letters and underscored.

Each of us has faces etched upon our memory we will never forget. Such a face I now recall. Strength and kindness were blended there with a glow of inner peace and joy. Seeing him you knew what our fathers meant when they spoke of a "goodly man." He had a good face, a noble face. Everyone personally acquainted with him knew what had chiseled the grandeur.

He was a railroad man, and he loved railroading. Through the years he had risen up the ranks until he had an important position of large re-

sponsibility. But there was another job he loved even more, a position he served as a labor of love. For almost a generation he had poured out his life in unselfish devotion as a teacher and worker in the church school of a small church in the little town where he made his home. Year after year he had taken courses of study to improve his leadership. He had served in whatever post was given him, high or low, in a cooperative and kindly spirit. A succession of young, inexperienced ministers had served that parish. He had been a faithful friend of and loyal co-worker with them all. Each rose up to call him blessed.

Remembering him I can say he, too, found life, spelled with capital letters and underscored.

III

"A chance at life." This we all want, and here it is at our doorstep! It is offered to us in the appeal and challenge of Rally Day.

It may be a class of boys or girls who need all our love, skill, and patience, who tax every resource we command. God is trusting us to establish and strengthen them in the Christian way. That's "a chance at life"!

It may be service as a worker i the Church School, some task of ad ministration, clerical work, or jus errands. It requires of us a loving an generous spirit, dependability, loya ty, and zeal. That's "a chance at life'

It may be service in the work c visitation. Christ has no feet but ou feet, no voice but our voice to reac and win them. There is a stranger yo can befriend, a new family on you street on whom you can pay a neigh borly visit and invite to church, a li tle boy across the street whom yo can bring with you to church schoo a witness for Christ you can make i the place where you work. These ar "a chance at life"!

There is opportunity to improve th quality of your home and family life Establish the custom of daily readin from the Bible and prayer, grow i understanding and the practice o love, beauty, and holiness. That "a chance at life"!

There is opportunity now to answe with all our hearts to the summons o Rally Day, to re-dedicate ourselves t Jesus Christ: to all that He woul help us become, to all He trusts u to do. That is our "chance at life"!

EVERY CHRISTIAN AN EVANGELIST

Aaron N. Meckel, First Congregational Church, St. Petersburg, Florida

Scripture: Acts 4:19, 20

Here is a stirring incident right out of the warm heart of the early church. Because they had healed a sick man in the name of Jesus Christ, Peter and John are summoned before the magistrates. So extraordinary had these ordinary men become that even their enemies and their critics took "knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus." They were, however, downright dangerous men, these Christian evangelists; and somehow, they must be silenced. The powers that be agree to let them go on or provision: that they cease speakin in the name of Jesus. Hear now th reply of Peter and John, which pu to shame our comparatively tame an timid witness of this day: "Wheth it be right in the sight of God hearken unto you more than un God, judge ye. For we cannot b speak the things which we ha heard and seen." Just catch the ove tones of that utterance! Threatene with persecution and even death, y

they must be propagandists and evangelists of the New and Living Way. God had put a new song in their hearts. They must sing it. Christ had imparted a new glory to their lives. They must share it. A divine and revolutionary proclamation had been entrusted to them: they must utter it. They could not but speak!

Now, the burden of this message is a plea for a renaissance of that impassioned spirit. Oh, for more "cannot but speak." Christians! We must have them or the Christian cause, and the civilization that sprang from it, will wither and languish. I heard of a man who was released from a Russian prison some years ago, on one condition—that he read and ponder the literature, the propaganda of Communism. Ours is a day of tremendous propagation and evangelism. Messiahs, true and false, are abroad, and we had better not sit back complacently, saying that God's side will win out in the long run. For where there is no vision, the people perish! I commend the common sense realism of the young Anglican clergyman, who along with others, was invited by the presiding bishop of his communion to attend a quiet retreat. He replied as follows: "What my church needs is not a quiet time, but an earthquake!"

I

First, it is only as every Christian again becomes an evangelist that the contemporary Church will retrieve the majestic and militant stature of the New Testament Church. Turn the pages of the Acts of the Apostles and you contact men who went up and down the world of their time saying, "We cannot but speak the things we have seen and heard." Pray, what things? Why, men formerly dead in their sins and trespasses, or infested with disease, restored to wholeness through the touch of Christ. Entire towns and cities shaken by the revolutionary power of the Gospel. The inspiration of being in fellowships of radiant people, the planting of those little colonies of heaven which constituted the first Christian churches. All that and more had Peter and John beheld. For they had themselves become personally aware of the difference Christ made when He took possession of a life. A mighty epidemic had swept them into a new orbit of life. "We cannot but speak the things we have seen and heard."

Now, what needs to be said is that miracles of healing and redemption and awakening of a like nature should be occurring in the modern Church, our church. They will happen again when we are ready for them. Said the prophet Isaiah, "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save, but your iniquities have separated between you and your God" (Isaiah 59:2). And a great Christian worker has given his opinion that "not miracles, but great faith has ceased." What we in America need to realize is that the spiritual awakening so much needed among us will not come through a merely routine Christianity nor by merely formal preaching, worship, praying. Neither will the kingdom of Christ come by means of impressive but deceptive year book statistics. If so, it would have come long ago. Here for instance, is a church boasting a membership of 2,500, but with an average attendance at worship of 400. Here is still another church with a membership of 1,200, with an average attendance of 250 listed. We need a modern Ezekiel to descend into the valley of our sterile Christendom, and to pray the prayer, "O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord, behold, I will cause breath (the Spirit) to enter into you, and ye shall live" (Ezekiel 37:4-5). No, not even to go to church regularly, or to listen to sedate and impressive sermons will suffice. What puts a growing edge on a church, and keeps it there, is something else: It is when every Christian and church member

becomes an evangelist, a bringer of others to Christ.

There is a new awareness abroad of the need of the fervent heart in Christian work. The ultimatum which the times hurls at us is simply, EVANGELIZE OR PERISH! Church of the living God, awaken to your great task of bringing the Gospel urgently again to men. Retrieve the stature of that church whose members and adherents once went the length of the known earth, saying, "We cannot but speak the things we have seen and heard!"

II

Nothing so tones up the element of personal experience, and retrieves the growing edge in a man's soul as for him to give himself away in warm, friendly, Christian witness! Has your spirit lost its initial zeal, and grown flabby? Then go out and win another person to Christ and your own feet shall be planted "on higher ground." Then the meaning of the Lord's command shall dawn on you with new significance: "Ye shall be My witnesses unto the uttermost parts of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

Somehow we must dispel the rank heresy that Christian preaching and witness are the task of certain professional men we call "ministers," and whom we engage to do it for us. When Christian laymen side-stepped their responsibility before God, saying, "it's the pastor's job, not mine," the Christian Cause was set back fifty years. As a result we have only made flank attacks on the sin and evil of our day. Stop a moment and think, friend, just how the Christian enterprise got started in the world. It "got going" as plain people like ourselves, men, women, boys and girls, who had experienced the transforming touch of Christ, felt an urge to share with others what they had received. Thus, in the first chapter of John's Gospel we read that Andrew, when he had found the Messiah, "first findeth his own brother Simon. And he brought him to Jesus" (John 1:41-42). Yes, the entire Christian enterprise, churches, worship, evangelism, missions, all grew by the power of an irresistible contagion. It spread like an epidemic as individuals "caught it" and shared what they found. Dwight Moody used to say that no man was ever really saved until he had brought at least one other person to Christ.

> For we must share if we would keep, That good thing from above;
> Ceasing to give we cease to have,
> Such is the law of love.

The kind of evangelism I am pleading for does not necessarily consist of huge mass meetings, brass bands and mass choirs. It isn't pretentious, and doesn't specialize in the stunt approach. Not that I belittle the need of mass evangelism. Not at all. But in a church like this, another kind of evangelism is more important. It is a grass roots affair. It begins right where you live and work and study. Its message is the warm response of your own soul to Christ. It's not at all pretentious, but brings amazing results when it is operative. Some of us are already at work, bearing a vital witness of word and deed. And as more and more of us come under the spell of Christ, and share His life with others, wonderful things are in store. Our ultimate aim is not to inflate church membership statistics, but to bring the Kingdom of Christ closer to men. A chief of police recently laid the fault of much of the juvenile waywardness of our day at the door of an un-evangelistic church. "The saving of souls," says he, "is rapidly becoming a lost art." We in the modern church need what the old fashioned Quakers used to call a "concern" for the lost. And God Himself, the Father of all spirits, must put that "concern" into our hearts.

George W. Truett, one of the foremost soul-winners of our generation loved to tell of a faithful Sunday School teacher in his church. She

summoned her pastor into a classroom one Sunday. Pointing to her group of boys she indicated that every one of them had personally committed his life to Christ, and sought baptism and membership in the church. Dr. Truett said that as he looked into the face of that humble, faithful Christian worker he re-grasped the meaning of the phrase "personal evangelism." In still another church, 100 men banded themselves together, and went out in the name of their Master, to claim others for Him and His Cause; everywhere they went, to business, service clubs, the various social circles, their own homes, their close neighbors, they urged the claim of the Redeemer and His Cause upon men. The result? One hundred new recruits for the Master were brought into the Christian fold. But is that all? No, for each man felt his own spiritual pulse quickened. A man in still another church of which the writer knows, and who had been used of Christ to win others, made this frank admission: I found out that I couldn't share what I didn't possess, so I went deeper." Recall the words of the beloved hymn—how close they are to the facts!

I love to tell the story,
It did so much for me,
And that is just the reason,
I tell it now to thee.

"Dad," said a high school boy to his father one Sunday, after hearing his pastor preach a challenging sermon, "Dad, what can we do about it?" I suggest that that lad asked the all-important question. What can we do, you and I? Well, at least several things:

We can say, with regard to the task of Christian sharing and witness: "It's my business, too. If I really want America and the world brought to the feet of my Master, then I shall cease shrugging responsibility from my shoulders."

We can realize that the Kingdom of God will not come closer by means of merely negative, resistant strategies. One gets tired of all this talk about "defending" the Christian church and heritage! The fact is that we must re-grasp the inner intent and meaning of the Christian Gospel. For the Gospel is a radiant, positive, confident reaching out to the unsaved and lost, in the mighty name of Christ. It is divine-human initiative in the making of Christian history, a deliberate taking of the battle to the stronghold of the enemy—primarily the spiritual indifference and the moral languor of our day—and asking him in the name of Jesus Christ, to repent. Only then will this bedeviled world and humanity of ours become poignantly aware again that God in Christ is mighty to save, and that the Church, called by His name, is His working agency on earth.

What can I do? I can go to some quiet place, kneel down before the One who loved and gave Himself for me, and pledge my life anew to Him. I can ask him to make the great imperative leap up in my heart, as it did in the hearts of Peter and John, until I too must say, "I cannot but speak the things I have seen and heard."

CHRIST, DOORWAY TO LIFE

Charles F. Jacobs, First Congregational Church, Waterloo, Iowa

I am the door . . . . I have come that they may have life, and have it abundantly.—John 10:9-10.

In his book, "I believe in Jesus Christ," Dr. Walter Russell Bowie asks: "Can you remember the first moment the thought of Jesus came in-

to your mind?" Without any hesitation about it I can answer that I cannot recall such a moment; Jesus was as much part of my childhood home as were my parents. His name was an integral part of the song, the laughter, and the tears of our family circle.

But the question intrigues me; it opens the door on fond memories. In soft nostalgia I retrace the paths of yesteryears. "In a moment, in the turning of a thought," I am a child again, seated with my parents in the little rural church nestling in the folds of the Missouri hills. The time is the months of the autumn harvest and of the revival meeting and the harvest of souls. A vital part of the fellowship was song. Through the mist of the years I can see Miss Ivy seated at the organ and I can hear the congregation singing with wild joy the old hymns: "Wonderful Words of Life," "Jesus is Tenderly Calling," "Jesus Loves Me," "Leaning on the Everlasting Arms," "Blessed Assurance," "Let Jesus Come Into Your Heart," "Jesus, Lover of My Soul," and a host of others.

The music was primitive but vital. The songs were love songs, the means by which these devout people expressed their faith in the Lord of life. Louis Armstrong, famed jazz musician, recently has been quoted as saying that the music he plays is really the old time gospel hymns. I have never forgotten these, and through the years one of them seems to live on with particular vividness:

> Take the name of Jesus with you,
> Child of sorrow and of woe—
> It will joy and comfort give you,
> Take it then where'er you go.
> Precious name, O how sweet!
> Hope of earth and joy of heaven.

For more than twenty centuries Jesus Christ has been for millions of men and women what he claimed to be—the doorway to life. "I am the door . . . . I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly." H. G. Wells said that by all the tests of history Jesus of Nazareth is the greatest man who ever lived. "The name of Jesus," said Emerson, "is not so much written as ploughed into the history of the world." To the weak he has been strength; to the sick he has been health; to the brokenhearted he has been healing; to the young he has been adventure; to the aged he has been a safe harbor; to the fearful he has been courage; to the mourner he has been comfort. Men have thought of him in many ways. To some he has been a divinity to be worshipped; to others, he has been the Son of God, born of a virgin, his resurrection being the seal and proof of his divinity. Many have thought of him as the wisest and best of men who, by the quality of his life, points the way to salvation by character.

"What shall we do with Jesus Christ?" remains the single most important issue man must settle. What we do with him will depend upon who we think he is and what place we think he ought to have in our lives. We do not know all that we would like to know about this man whose fame flashed like a meteor across the ancient world and divided time into B.C. and A.D. But what we do know about him tells us that here was one, the hem of whose garment we are unworthy to touch. He was not only good but also wise. He remains what he claimed to be — the doorway to life.

I

For one thing, we need no longer to think of him as he, all too often, has been portrayed by the artist. These men, in their zeal to represent the greatness of the Master, have often pictured him as an emaciated, effeminate Anglo-Saxon, with a permanent wave set off by a halo. Being dissatisfied with this conception there have been others who have gone in for anatomical designing, featuring the broken, bleeding heart. It is difficult

to see how these grotesqueries could have inspired anything other than pity, revulsion, and perhaps disrespect.

Happily, modern scholarship, after a hundred years of work in untangling the records of the past, have revealed to us a new conception of the Lord. Far from being an effeminate, meek and mild person, the new Jesus is one who commands respect and can be followed in vital ways. His was a many faceted life, reflecting all the emotions of a normal person. He was a man familiar with grief, but he joined in laughter at the wedding reception.

Recently I heard a devout woman trying to describe how she thought about Christ. "He must have been a very good, a very gentle, a very kind individual," she said. This is not to be equated with the old notion of Jesus meek and mild. He combined in his own being both gentleness and sternness. Carl Sandburg, speaking before a combined session of the two houses of the legislature in commemoration of the one hundred fiftieth anniversary of Abraham Lincoln, said: "Not often in the story of mankind does a man arrive on earth who is hard as rock and soft as drifting fog, who holds in his heart and mind the paradox of terrible storm and peace unspeakable and perfect." Well, long before Lincoln, there appeared such a one of whom all this and more could have been said. There was a sense in which the Master was "as soft as drifting fog." He identified with the sufferings and struggle of people. No one in need escaped his notice. To the morally confused woman, accused and condemned by her contemporaries, he said: "Neither do I condemn you. Go and sin no more." The halt, the lame and the blind were within his focus of concern. He was moved with compassion when he beheld the faltering multitudes.

Jesus never knew privilege. He was one of the people. He spoke the language of the common man and one of the reporters tells us that "the common people heard him gladly." His life was characterized by an infinite gentleness. One historian, comparing and contrasting the lives of Lincoln and Washington, says that Washington was above the people while Lincoln was one of the people. This was infinitely more pronounced in the life of Jesus Christ. He was one of the people and he believed that all people—the rich and the poor, the weak and the strong—were children of the heavenly Father.

But the Galilean had another side to him; he was "as hard as rock." He could be stern when the occasion demanded. All of the gospel writers give an account of Jesus cleansing the temple. The writer of the Fourth Gospel says that when Jesus discovered people selling livestock and exchanging money in the temple, he made a whip of cords, drove them out of the temple and over-turned their tables. Let us not water down this story with the claim that it is an exaggeration. It reveals another facet of the Lord's character; he could be stern and demanding with those who made a mockery of religion. He held a point of view that was in profound contrast to the Pharisaic leaders. "The words of Jesus," says Dr. Colwell, "have the rugged fiber of the cypress tree and the jagged edge of the crosscut saw." The epithets which he hurled at the Pharisees reveals the stern aspect of the Master: "You blind fools!" "You blind Pharisee!" "You hypocrites!" "You brood of vipers!" "You murderers!" The man from whose lips these explosive epithets were hurled was the same man who counseled those who paused to hear him "to love their enemies and to pray for those who persecuted them." Modern scholars have revealed to us a Jesus of whom it can truly be said: "He was hard as rock and soft as drifting fog."

II

Again, as scholars have untangled

many of the inconsistencies in the early accounts of Jesus' life, we see him as a man who loved life and entered deeply into its mysteries. The old conception of a man with a long countenance, unrelieved by joy and laughter, gives way to the picture of one who drank of the beauty of his Father's world. Life was no vale of tears. He was the man of sorrow, acquainted with grief, but he was also a man of joy, acquainted with laughter.

The little wayside discourses which were to become a part of the gospels are replete with references to nature. Jesus grew up in Nazareth. We know little about the years of his childhood but I like to think that he joined in all the play of the boys and girls of his community. From some vantage point above his home town he must have rejoiced in the beauty of the sunrise and the sunset. From this same promontory, looking southward, he would see the caravans of soldiers and merchants moving across the Valley of Esdraelon, hinting of lands beyond the red horizon. In that same fertile valley he had watched the farmer sowing seed in the springtime and noted that some fell on stony ground and withered and others fell on good soil and yielded a great harvest. The wild flowers that grew on the mountainside reminded him of God's love and power. "Consider the lilies of the field how they grow; they neither toil nor spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." He had watched a mother hen gather her brood under her wings, and this reminded him of God's love and compassion for all his people. Standing above the Holy City, weeping over the sins of his people, the memory of this childhood experience returned to him: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, killing the prophets and stoning those who are sent to you! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not!"

The new picture of Jesus, revealed to us by the painstaking work of modern scholars, is the picture of a man who loved life, all of it — his home, the countryside, the flowers of the field and the birds of the heaven. All of these things had become a part of him. Nothing in the vast world of nature seemed to escape his attention. His messages are studded with illustrations from life: a fish net, lambs and wolves, vultures around a dead body, sheep and goats, serpents and doves, figs and thistles, a patch on an old garment, a lamp and a bushel basket, dogs under the table, and the pearl of great price. If we follow this Jesus, he will open to us the great door of appreciation for God's world.

But, most of all, Jesus loved people, all kinds of people — the winebibber, the glutton, the hated Samaritan, the leper, the blind, the tax collector, and the morally confused. Jesus loved people for what they were and for what, with God's help, they might become. Kahlil Gibran, in his "Jesus, the Son of Man," represents the Lord saying to Mary Magdalene: "All men love you for themselves. I love you for yourself."

Jesus believed that people could be trusted. He believed that love begets love, and trust begets trust. When he launched his movement he chose twelve ordinary men and placed his trust in them. One of them denied him and another betrayed him, but in the end eleven were to justify his faith in them. People responded to him with enthusiasm. Make no mistake about it, he was immensely popular. Everywhere Jesus went the crowds came out to see him and to hear his message. He had good reason to believe that, given a chance to present his cause in the Holy City, he might win the populous to his side. It was his enormous popularity that frightened the Roman and Jewish leaders, and caused them to take steps to destroy him. Perhaps one of

the finest tributes that can be paid to Jesus is the fact that people felt at home in his presence. Peter, the stormy member of the Twelve, was awed by his Master's goodness, but there is no indication that he was embarrassed in his presence. Publicans and sinneers sat at the table with him. He had the unique capacity to bring out the best in men. Zaccheus, seeing mirrored in the calm eyes across the table from him the picture of the man he ought to be, arose and went out to walk in a new way of life. And Simon, being challenged as he had never been challenged, became Peter, the rock — the insight upon which Jesus would build his church.

III

We come to one final observation: Jesus, if we give ourselves to him, will become for us the doorway to faith in God and a purposeful universe. We are living in a generation when this faith is critically needed. The whirlwinds of hatred and violence that sweep about us in this twentieth century cause us to question our traditional beliefs in a meaningful world. Man, as he builds ever more ghastly instruments of destruction and talks openly about a conflagration that might reduce the earth to a radioactive cinder, seems to be in the clutches of some demonic power from which there can be no escape. There are people who believe that this universe is a cosmic prison, having all the characteristics of the dungeon in the Middle Ages — not high enough to stand up in and not wide enough to lie down in. Theodore Dreiser put into words what many believe: "I catch no meaning from all I have seen, and pass quite as I came, confused and dismayed."

Faith in the goodness of God and the meaning of life has never been easy. For a long time Job had serious doubts about God and about the meaning of the human adventure. Koheleth, the preacher, could see nothing but vanity in the scheme of things. These ancient questioners have their modern counterparts in such men as Sartre, Heidegger, and Camus — advocates of the philosophy of existentialism. It is not strange, I think, that the disruptions, the cruelties, and the suffering caused by the long wars of the old world should have produced men such as these. They are not to be condemned. They are honest men, wrestling with the dreadful disharmonies of life, and, while we cannot accept their conclusions, we respect their search. The philosophy of existentialism declares that man is alone in the universe and that his pilgrimage is a plunge toward the abyss. Albert Camus, the Nobel prize winner, has developed the concept of the "Absurd." There are, according to Camus, a limited number of responses man may make to the Absurd — suicide, the leap of faith, or the eat, drink and be merry attitude. He sees that none of these will really work, so he says man must meet life with obstinate persistence. In this manner he does not renounce the world but revolts against it, and in the process of revolt he creates, without of the help of God, his own values.

Over against this bleak outlook on life let us take a look at our universe through Jesus Christ. Here is a way of life, despite the cruelties, injustices, and frustrations which surround us all, does not end in the swamps of despair. Jesus lived on the assumption that this was his Father's world. He believed that it was a universe that admitted of freedom of choice; and, far from being a prison house, was the place for the growing of souls. He believed that love was the highest value in the universe and he made that principle concrete in his own life. God was his daily companion. When we pause to think that out of this universe has come, not only suffering, brutality, and injustice, but great souls such as Jeremiah, Jesus, Saint Francis, and Abra-

ham Lincoln, it is absurd to say that this universe is nothing more than a cosmic slave mill. Never say it!

We need to take a long look at Jesus. As the war clouds loom menacingly on the horizon, he haunts us with the saying: "I am the door. I have come that they may have life, and have it abundantly." He is the way and the truth and the life.

LIFE'S INVITATIONS

Nenien C. McPherson, Jr., Grace Methodist Church, Dayton, Ohio

Scripture: Mark 10:17-22

Jesus was constantly issuing invitations to men: "Come, follow me!" "Come unto me!" "Come and see." "Come, enter into the kingdom." Some men responded, as did Matthew, the tax collector. He rose and followed Jesus. Others went away sorrowful; they could not accept the challenge.

The world is incessantly issuing invitations also: "Enjoy yourself; it is later than you think." 'See to your own interests; if you don't look after No. 1, who will?" Let yourself go; away with every restraint; express yourself; do as you like." Eat, drink, and be merry, because tomorrow we die."

I

Life's invitations present choices. One of the marks of maturity is the ability to make decisions, to learn from our mistakes, to assume responsibility for our choices, to discover what we really want in life, to know what is worth having and what things endure the changes of time. We must learn to choose.

We are constantly making choices. Even to decide not to choose is to make a choice. We choose the low way or the high way, but each must choose. So John Oxenham reminds us in 'The Cross at the Crossways":

See there! God's signpost, standing at the ways
Which every man of his free will must go—
Up the steep hill, or down the winding ways,
One or the other, every man must go.
He forces no man, each must choose his way,
And as he chooses so the end will be;
One went in front to point the Perfect Way,
Who follows fears not where the end will be.

II

Jesus' first and all-inclusive invitation is: "Follow me." He calls men to be his disciples, his companions and comrades in a high adventure. He calls each one of us to enter into God's kingdom; that is, to bring our lives under the sovereign rule of God's will and purpose.

The young man of our Scripture Lesson, or the rich young ruler, as Matthew refers to him, had been to school and knew the answers, but he had not developed insight into their meaning for his life. He had kept the Commandments strictly but he had not found a relationship to God which brought him peace. He must have been an attractive young man and Jesus saw that he had real possibilities for leadership in his cause, for Mark tells us that "Jesus looking upon him loved him." The young man, however, had asked his question in the wrong way and he was unwilling to pay the price of discipleship. There were at least three things wrong with his question:

His approach was that of flattery: "Good teacher." Jesus' response was in line with his Hebrew tradition: "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone." This response

of Jesus has caused much concern among the theologians down through the ages. One of our Christian convictions is that Jesus was without sin. That is a negative way of stating it. What we have in mind is that when Jesus faced a choice, as he and every man must face them continuously, he always chose the higher value, the upper road rather than the lower. He never saw human need without attempting to answer it in every way he could. He was not only good but he was good for something. But for Jesus, all men are dependent upon the supreme goodness whose source is God himself. The difficulty has always been to affirm the real humanity of Jesus but without that he has little meaning for us. It has always been easy to say with the Centurion who looked upon him hanging on the Cross: "Truly this man was a son of God." (Mark 16:39). The Incarnation, the central Christian conviction, requires that Jesus be a real man as well as the Son of God. Luke makes clear that Jesus was dependent upon the Father and that he was subject to the same laws of growth in every realm to which we as human beings are subject: "And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature (or years), and in favor with God and man" (Luke 2:25).

Jesus knew the temptation which is pride. Pride is the most subtle and deadly of all sins; it means to be overcome with a sense of satisfaction with one's achievements and to feel superior to anyone who is not just exactly as we are. Not even one who knew himself to be in a peculiar relationship to God the Father could afford to yield to the temptation to self-sufficiency and pride. There is danger, of course, that we shall be proud of our humility. In an autobiography published in 1930 there occurs this strange statement: "I have never lost the childlike humility which characterizes truly great men." Doubtless this individual never realized the contradiction involved in his statement. Again, pride is a very subtle temptation.

The second thing that is wrong with the young man's question is that it reveals how egocentric he was: "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" Concentration on the improvement of one's own character may be self-defeating, for it tends to turn the eyes inward, to blind us to the needs of others, instead of turning our attention outward. We can only have a satisfactory personal life when we forget ourselves: "whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it" (Mark 8:35).

The hypochondriac is an individual whose anxiety about his health keeps him in a state of ill-health and takes all the joy out of living. The possessive parent is likewise defeated by his own attitude and approach for his attempt to absorb his grown child's interest and affection merely drives the child away and destroys the concern for his parent that is normal. The same principle is seen where an individual seeks love selfishly without regard to what happens to the object of his "love," particularly if in the process he disregards the conventions of society, for he discovers with the English poet Lovelace:

> I could not love thee, dear, so much,
> Lov'd I not honour more.

Seeking personal salvation in a narrow sense, therefore, is always self-defeating for the "self" shrinks in the process. So Elton Trueblood declares: "Our religion fails whenever it becomes a means of spiritual indulgence, making us feel good **alone.** It succeeds only when it drives us to an awareness of suffering, struggling humanity everywhere, so that we can no longer look upon ourselves as separate persons, but persons involved inextricably in the entire human struggle."

A third error involved in the young man's question to Jesus was in think-

ing that religion is primarily a matter of doing something. He was seeking a new formula, a new set of laws by which to live, for he had not found inward peace in keeping the Law of Moses.

Jesus' answer at this point was in quoting the Commandments which he summarized on another occasion as loving God with all one's heart and mind and soul and body and loving one's neighbor as he loves himself. When love becomes central, one ceases to live by minute rules because of the spirit that is within him determining his outlook and choices. This was what Augustine had in mind when he said, "Love God, and do as you please." If love of God becomes dominant, we will behave almost instinctively as we should.

Jesus knew that the religious life is not a matter of keeping external laws but is rather loyalty to God's spirit of love and this requires us to develop an independent judgment: 'Why do you not judge for yourselves what is right?" (Luke 12:57). Guidance comes from without from many sources: for a Christian, from Jesus first of all, from the Bible, from the Church, from friends and family, but the seeing is our task. Truth and goodness must be validated in our own minds and experience if they are to be determinative for us.

Finally, Jesus laid his finger on this young man's greatest difficulty: his life was centered in himself and what happened to him and it was made by his possessions; his possessions gave him the only sense of security he knew; therefore, the only solution for him was to give away all that he had and trust God and find his life in God's service, that is, the service of God's children and God's kingdom. The one thing he lacked he was not ready to receive, so "at that saying his countenance fell, and he went away sorrowful; for he had great possessions."

III

Discipleship is not primarily a matter of studying with a teacher; it is rather apprenticeship, learning by doing under the guidance of one with more experience. Jesus' invitation to men was for them to enter into a contagious fellowship, to become a part of the "fellowship of the concerned," to develop skills in kingdom ways of living and responding. The church is best described, when it is true to what a church ought to be, as the "fellowship of the concerned." As Dr. Harris Franklin Rall once said: 'The church is the union of those who love in the service of those who need." It is a fellowship of those who are bound together by their common loyalty to the God who comes in Christ and that loyalty always expresses itself in Christ-like service of those in need because they are God's children.

Jesus' invitation to discipleship, therefore, is a call to decide on our highest loyalty, what is to be first in our lives. The response of one who would be a Christian is to put the Christ-like God first, to give one's highest loyalty to him. So Peter responded in the first century: "We must obey God rather than men." That must always be our choice when a choice must be made between the objects of our loyalty—family, race and country. This means that truth, honor and integrity must always be above our desires and must determine all decisions.

Discipleship, being apprenticeship, means that because we live by the principle of love in the "fellowship of the concerned" we find it a costly process. It means discipline and sacrifice often times.

Garibaldi is the great Italian patriot and the father of his nation, even as Washington is of ours. His life covered most of the nineteenth century and a large part of it was spent in revolutionary activities to creat a united Italy. About the middle of that century he found himself in

Rome with French troops moving against the city and defeat certain for the moment. Defeated but undismayed, he appealed to the cheering throng that had gathered in the Piazza of St. Jeter's in these words: "I am going out from Rome. Let those who wish to continue the war against the stranger, come with me. I offer neither pay, nor quarters, nor provisions; I offer hunger, thirst, forced marches, battles, and death. Let him who loves his country in his heart and not with his lips only, follow me." Four thousand men marched out of Rome with him in answer to his challenge.

Luke records three incidents of men who expressed a desire to follow Jesus but who did not because of a loyalty higher than that to him and God's kingdom. Like Garibaldi at a later period, he did not promise ease or glory or success, ather he called men in these words: 'If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me" (Luke 9:23).

One man came to Jesus declaring, "I will follow you wherever you go." Jesus' answer was to test his sincerity by reminding him that he and his disciples had not settled home and that he would spend his life wandering from one place to another: "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." The call is to hardship and sacrifice, and he did not join the "fellowship of the concerned."

Another man likewise offered to follow but he conditioned his discipleship by requesting permission first to go and bury his father. Jesus' answer to him seems very strange: "Leave the dead to bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God." Jesus is either urging loyalty to the kingdom above the tradition that the eldest son should remain home until the father has died to see that he has a decent burial or he is counseling this individual to come out from among the spiritually dead who will not pay the price of discipleship and work for the coming of the kingdom for which Jesus was living and for which he was to die.

The third man made it very clear that his first loyalty was to his family and home, so he desired to bid his loved ones farewell. This is a good loyalty but Jesus was calling men to choose between all lower loyalties and the higher loyalty to God's cause. Luke ends the ninth chapter in which these three incidents are recorded by quoting Jesus as saying, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God," just as no man who would plow a straight furrow in a field can turn his eyes away from his immediate task.

The central question in all these failures to place God's kingdom first is one of priority and self-denying devotion. The other interests of these men are good but they should have taken a secondary place in their lives. Jesus was heading for Jerusalem and he could easily anticipate what his fate there would most likely be. Only the bravest and the fully committed could be good companions for the journey and even the inner Twelve did not prove worthy of the challenge. As Doctor Tittle has written in this connection: "Christianity essentially is for heroes or those who at lease aspire to a life of active devotion to great ends, and not for people who are content merely to phrase lofty sentiments and pass brave resolutions. In utter devotion to the kingdom of God, Jesus himself embraced voluntary poverty, suffered the alienation of family and friends, faced constant calumny and vicious threat, and finally gave up his life on a cross."

Jesus' invitation: "Follow me," is a call to enlist, to follow without reservation.

THE EXCLUSIVENESS OF CHRISTIANITY

Theodore P. Ferris, Trinity Church, Boston, Massachusetts

One of the things about Christianity which is perhaps the hardest for a great many intelligent men and women to accept is its exclusiveness. It is exclusive not in the sense that it excludes anyone from its membership; everyone is eligible for membership in the Christian fellowship. It is exclusive, rather, in the sense that it excludes all other gods from its Temple. It is exclusive not in the sense that some social clubs are exclusive, accepting and rejecting the people that are to be admitted as members, but exclusive in the sense that the "final" club or fraternity in a college is a club which, when a man joins it, he joins no other. In other words, Christianity is an exclusive religion in the sense that it is a "final" religion; you cannot be a Christian and a Moslem, or a Buddhist, or a Hindu. It is a religion which claims the exclusive loyalty of a man because of the fact that it claims to be a revelation of the truth about God and man and life that is ultimate, and which it can share with no other revelation.

Now, this is a stumbling block for a good many intelligent people. They are perfectly prepared to recognize the fact that Jesus Christ is one of the great religious leaders of the world, one of the few perhaps, but when they hear Peter say, "There is no salvation by anyone else; there is no other name under heaven by which we must be saved," they balk at that. That seems to them narrow-minded, provincial, an overstatement of fact, and it is a real hindrance to them in their acceptance of Christianity.

I

There are at least two good reasons why people are afraid of this particular kind of exclusiveness. For one thing, they know more about the religions of the world than perhaps their parents or their grandparents knew. If they have been to college, they very likely have taken courses in comparative religion in which they have investigated some of the religions that their grandparents dismissed as "heathen." They have read snatches of the Koran and the Bhagavad-Gita and some of the Taoist religious scriptures, and they have seen spiritual heights and insights in these religious literatures which come close to, if not equal to, those that they find in their own scriptures. They may even have had a Hindu or a Moslem for a roommate, and as they have come to know him in that intimate relationship, they have sometimes found that in many ways he was superior in his spiritual life to many of the Christian boys and girls that they know. Also, the fact that they travel about more, and that word gets around more quickly than it used to, has a great deal to do with this sphere of the exclusive claim of Christianity.

Then, too, they have seen the havoc caused by people who think that they have a monopoly on the truth. Most recently, they have seen that expressed and demonstrated in the political field. From time to time in the history of the world and most recently in our own time in Germany, and now in Russia, there have been people who have risen before the world with the claim that they are God's chosen people, and that they have the right to rule, and that the truth is their monopoly, and that all others must make way for them. They see what havoc this causes in the world, how people like the Germans under Hitler — not all the Germans, of course, but the ones who were caught in his spell — could throw the whole world into turmoil and tumult by their belief. And they see the same thing happen religiously. They have read the story of the Christian religion; they know how great Chris-

ns like Calvin did not hesitate to
other Christians to death because
y didn't believe the way he did.
ey know how the Inquisition in
Roman Catholic Church did not
itate to burn people at the stake
ause they did not believe the
th as they felt it had been revealed
them.And much more poignantly,
y see in their own families and in
families of their friends the trou-
that is caused by good and honest
enthusiastic Christian parents
o believe that they have the truth
their church has revealed it, and
t a girl or boy who is in another
rch and wants to marry their son
daughter is completely outside the
e because he belongs to another
nch of Christ's church. You can-
blame them, in a way, for being
picious of this kind of exclusive-
ss, this belief that we have some-
ng that claims the exclusive loyal-
of all men and women ultimately,
that refuses to share its place
h any others in the pantheon of
er gods. You can see and under-
nd, at least I can, why they have
h a suspicion and fear, and why
tatement like this by Arnold Toyn-
makes such an appeal to them:
can't honestly call myself a believ-
Christian in the traditional sense.
imagine that one's own church,
lization, nation or family is the
sen people is, I believe, as wrong
it would be for me to imagine
t I myself am God."

There are two things, however, that
hink they are likely to overlook,
I should like to make them as
ar as I can before we proceed any
ther. The first is that at the cen-
of every life of great achieve-
nt you will find some sort of ex-
sive loyalty. Take people that we
ow something about. First, Albert
eitzer, the great medical doctor of
uatorial Africa. What is it, do you
ppose, that is the dynamic of
hweitzer's life? What is the incen-
e and the power that has made
n sacrifice the things that he has
sacrificed, and stick at his job in that hospital in Africa? Isn't it his exclusive loyalty to the principle which he describes as "reverence for life"? And by that he means all life, not only human life, but animal life as well. What do you suppose would happen to Schweitzer if someone went to him and said, "Why don't you satisfy yourself with saying that this principle of reverence for life is one principle among many; there are other people in the world who hold different attitudes towards life, who think that some lives should be reverenced and other lives not reverenced, but this is my particular preference. There are people who believe that life is cheap and that is their privilege, and that, perhaps, is one side of the truth." You can imagine what would happen to Schweitzer if he took that view. If the principle of reverence for life did not claim the exclusive loyalty of Schweitzer because he felt that it is at the heart of the very nature of reality itself, that it applies as much in Germany, China, or in the United States as it does in Africa; if he didn't believe that, his whole life would crumble.

One other example from secular life. What was it, do you suppose, that kept Lincoln going all through the dark days of the Civil War? It was the conviction, which he may not have put in words every day to himself, but he did occasionally, that all men are created equal, not equal in their ability or talent, but equal in their right to be treated as human beings. What do you suppose he would have said to a person who said to him," Why don't you take this as a relative principle? It's one good principle among many, but in other parts of the world it would not be as applicable as it is here. We're willing to follow you if you will accept this principle on the basis of one good cause among many." It would have taken the heart and fire right out of his opposition to slavery. It was because he believed that this principle

is ultimately true, and true for all men and women everywhere, that he could give himself the way he did.

II

Peter, James and John are examples of the early Christians. What do you suppose it was that gave them the endurance to face the opposition and all the discouragements of those early days when Christianity had to fight opposition from every side? Do you think they could have done it if they had believed something like this: that Jesus is one of the remarkable men in the history of the world, that he has things to say that will always be reckoned among the great sayings of the world, and his way of life is one way among many, that there are other ways in Greece and Egypt of which generous account must be made, but that his way is one that we preferred. That would not have fired anyone to do anything; it was because they believed that there was no salvation by anyone else, that there was no other key to the ultimate mysteries of life save that found in Jesus and that there was no other name; in other words, no other character under heaven by which men might be saved. That is what gave them their incentive. Every life you look at that amounts to anything has some such exclusive loyalty. We can put it down as a fact that men who are loyal to everything in general are likely to be loyal to nothing in particular.

The other thing I think the people are considering are likely to overlook is that these very exclusive loyalties can be inclusive loyalties. In other words, these loyalties that seem to be so separatist and to exclude a man from a great many other realms of life can be the loyalties that can lead to the lesser loyalties.

For example, the man with an exclusive loyalty to one woman who is his wife, I think, more likely to respect all women than the man who professes no exclusive loyalty to any woman in particular but a general interest in all women. So, isn't it tr that a man with one exclusive lo alty to one country for which he willing to give his life is more like to respect the rights and privileg of another country and appreciate i contributions than a man who doesn care anything about any countr And isn't it also true that a man wh has one supreme, exclusive loyalty one God, one Lord and Master, more likely to appreciate, understan and acknowledge the reflections that God in other places and oth religious cultures than the man wh doesn't care anything about any Go In other words, these exclusive lo alties of ours need not remove us e tirely from appreciating the rest the world. Quite to the contrary, the are the very loyalties that are like to lead us out into the lesser loya ties.

III

Let us go one step further, and s that there are two things that Christian can reasonably say abo this exclusive claim, and the first that there is something unique abo Jesus. Sometimes, I think, we ha made claims that were not justifie and tried to say to people that Jes was completely original, and that n one ever said the things that he sai and no one ever thought anythi like the things he thought, and neith one of those statements, of cours can be justified. Most of the thin that Jesus said had been said by pe ple in the Old Testament, and so of them can be found in one form o another in the other great religio literatures of the world. And we do do our cause any good when we mal claims that are not true to fact. We c say, however, that in Jesus the lif forces have gathered themselves t gether in such a way as to make unique impact upon the conscienc and imagination of all men. Oth men have said things similar to t things Jesus said, but they are fo gotten. Other men have died deat as painful and tragic and undeserve

Jesus died, but the men themves are more or less forgotten. In us, for reasons that we do not tend to understand, the energies of d were so drawn together and ncentrated and focused in one perality that through him God has eased powers available to human ngs that He has not released in er places or in other people. I nk we can say that without any r of contradiction.

Also we can say that the character Christ is the ultimate test of all aracter. It is not a character as lly developed as the character of a rson like Socrates who had a long e to work out his character and velop it on many fronts, but the ence of the character of Jesus is giving of life, reality, straightwardness, a spirit of gentleness and st, the will and the power to save , an approach to the mystery of which is the key to all mystery. course, people in other parts of e world might not agree with us, d we would not agree with them, t I think that is a different matter. e have every right, if we believe it, make the claim that the character Jesus is the ultimate test of all aracter. For instance, when people that Gandhi, or Socrates, or anye else, is "Christ-like," are they lging Gandhi or Socrates by Je, or Jesus by them? Isn't it true t we always judge other members the human race, whether they be at people like Ghandi or Socrates, unknown people like ourselves, we lge them and test them by Christ? w close do they come to his standd? When Gandhi died, the thing the Western world that was said out him, and even in the papers of own country, as a tribute that uld most nearly express people's pression of him, was that he was a rist-like man. And I have no emrrassment in saying to anybody, ether he agrees with me or not, at in Christ we have a character at is the ultimate standard and test of all human character whether Chinese or American, Asiatic or Western, and that, furthermore, in that character God made Himself known.

There are some things in life that there are no two ways about. The world may be either round or flat, but it cannot be both. If you believe that it is round, and the evidence supports your belief, then though you have all sorts of sympathy and patience with the people who don't believe it, you can't say that they are in just as secure a position as you are because you know that they are in error, that the world is not flat. Just so, human beings may be made in the image of God or they may not be, but they cannot be both, and if you believe, as the Christian does, that in every human being there is a spark of divine life from which he comes, which entitles him to the treatment that you give to holy things, no matter how he may misuse his life, then you can't believe that a human being is an "untouchable," or a person who can be bought as a slave and used as property, or simply a cog in the machinery of the state. It is one or the other, and there are no two ways about it.

If you believe that Jesus is the revelation of the nature of God in terms of love and character, and that in the long run the very nature of the universe is expressed and exposed in this one brief life so that all life must ultimately be interpreted in the light of that life, if you believe that, you can't believe that the ultimate nature of the universe is chance, or fate, or blind power, or any of the other things that people believe it to be. You may have all the good will in the world for people who do believe that, but you cannot assume that you and they stand on equal ground, and that you can share your God with them. They are different. If you believe that love is the key to life, and the world because God has made it is good, you cannot at the same time believe that the world is a vale of mis-

ery, and that it is the source of all evil, and that the main incentive of life is to get out of it into Nirvana, the kingdom of gods. It is one or the other. And Christianity, I think, can say to the world in making its exclusive claim upon men's loyalty that there is something unique about Christ, and that there are some things that there are no two ways about, and that on these things we cannot obscure the issue.

IV

Finally, there the two things that Christians ought to remember, and these I can mention very briefly. The first is to leave the future of other people in God's hands. More ill will, I think, has been created by Christians across the face of the earth by their presuming to say that people who are not baptized into the Christian fellowship are thereby damned when they die. Maybe they are; I, for one, don't believe it. But we do not have to speculate about the future, and what happens to people after they die is God's business, and it would be wiser for Christians, I think, not to talk about it and not to make claims that cannot be justified at all.

The other thing to remember is this. Don't try to impose Christianity upon anybody. Some Christian missionaries in the past have made that mistake; they may be making it now for all I know, but I think they a fewer in number. Every human b ing has his own way to God. We ha every right to expose him to t things that we believe to be true. W are convinced, for instance, that ed cation opens doors to a human bei that cannot possibly be opened any other way, and we have every r sponsibility to expose all men ever where to the wonder and riches life through the realms of educatio but we have no right to impose upon them. We believe that Christ Jesus God opened the doo into life and its possibilities hither undreamed of, and we have eve right and responsibility to expo every person on the earth to tho riches and wonders. We have no rig to impose them upon anybody.

These, then, are some of the thin that may have been bothering you you think about Christianity. Th sermon has not been directed to yo inner anxieties or personal trouble as many of the sermons quite right are. It is directed, as you can see, one of the basic assumptions of Chri tianity which an intelligent huma being has to think through. It has do with the exclusive claim of Chri tianity upon a man's undivided lo alty, on the assumption that there no salvation by anyone else, and th there is no other name under heave by which men may be saved.

MISSION IN THE WORLD

David Glanville Rees, English Presbyterian Church, Llandudno, North Wales

Behold, I send you forth.—Luke 10:3.

The ministry, death and risen life of our Lord are not to be confined to the first century A.D. in the land of Palestine. Christianity was never meant to be something static, but a dynamic and a progressive movement. Christ Himself conceived of it as a mission to the world. This fact is well illustrated for us in the account of the sending forth of the 70 in Luke 10.

1. Materials of the Mission

These were the 70 followers of o Lord who are usually called disciple They must be those who are willi to be taught, and this trait of chara ter calls for humility. The greate hindrance to the work of God com from among the people in the chur who think that they knew pret much all that there is to be know

bout the Faith. The sack of spiritual nowledge is already full and, what s more, it is soundly tied and sealed. This kind of material is utterly unacceptable and well nigh unuseable by the great master. Prospective workers must realize at the very outset that the Lord Himself is the teacher and that His pupils are required to be very humble and submissive. The true disciples of Jesus re always learners and are ever willing to be taught the truths of Holy Scripture, under the guidance and inspiration of the Spirit of God.

II. Message of the Mission

Dr. Denny, the great Scottish theologian, used to say that people don't believe in missions because they don't believe in Christ. The widespread ignorance of the Christian Faith today s largely due to the secularism of modern man. Secularism causes man o live one dimension lives. But neans nothing to these people. But he message of the mission is for these ery people, and it is to be passed on o them at the express request of the ord Himself. "Tell the people of the world," says Jesus, "the Kingdom of God is come nigh unto you." He came o bring in His Kingdom among the oor, blind, maimed, imprisoned and efeated people of this world. He umbled Himself and became one of hem that He might carry their sorows and remove their transgressions. The Kingdom of God is within the each of every man, and he must ossess it through faith in the King. The kingdom is no longer national, ut universal. It is no longer future, ut present. It is no longer temporal, ut eternal. And it is no longer maerial, but spiritual. This Kingdom is igh unto you.

III. Method of the Mission

Many denominations and Church ouncils which have debated the best nethod of evangelism to be adopted or the modern world have often disegarded the method specifically laid lown by our Lord in this tenth chaper of St. Luke.

The disciples were sent forth by the Master two by two into the villages and the towns, to dwell among the people in their every day surroundings. They were to dwell in their homes and bring the Christian influence to bear upon those who received them. It was a process of quiet infiltration.

They were not to thrust their convictions down people's throats. There was to be no harshness or unkindness. They were not to compel others to believe as they believed. It was to be the policy of peace at all times and at all cost. If some people were reluctant to receive them, then they were to depart peaceably.

The modern church is continually anxious. We are far too anxious about keeping our own heads above water to heed the challenge of the world-wide harvest field. Note, therefore, the special relevance of our Lord's method. He tells His followers to be anxious for nothing. They are not to take a purse, nor shoes, nor are they to carry two cloaks. In other words, the mission must always be a venture of faith. There is a real condition involved in this. If you go for Christ and preach the Gospel to every creature, then, says the Lord and Master of the field, "Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world." God will supply all your needs, if you are prepared to live and work for Him.

It will take a great deal of conviction and courage to live and work and witness for Jesus Christ among the everyday haunts and homes of men generally. Christians must take their stand uncompromisingly for their Lord and, when required, must be prepared to withstand the opposition of evil. If the people will not accept you, says our Lord, then shake off the dust of your feet against them as a reminder that the Kingdom of God has already come among them, and as a symbol that the responsibility of accepting a place in that King-

dom is now, henceforth, entirely their own.

Menace to the Mission

There are certain occupations that are highly dangerous and there are tasks in life that involve a great deal of risk. But there is nothing on earth more exacting and more dangerously daring than to participate in the spiritual warfare of the Kingdom of God. Youth and manhood, we are told, are fond of adventure and daring exploits. This then is the challenge of Christian missions to our generation. They that believe in God shall be strong and do exploits. Witnessing and working for the coming of God's Kingdom can be a tough and dangerous proposition, which calls for wholehearted consecration.

There are three menacing words used by our Lord in this chapter to describe the kind of opposition to expect. They are: wolves, serpents, and scorpions. We shudder at the sound of these words, because we know the dreadful havoc that can be caused by such vicious and poisonous creatures. These deadly enemies have their counterparts in the spiritual warfare of the Kingdom of God. We can think of the dishonesty, bribery, and corruption practiced in modern society. We are witnessing the dangerous trend of the age toward an excessive love of pleasure, comfort and ease, and the desecration of the Lord's Day and the neglect of God and His Church. This insidious poison is manifesting itself in a lowering of morals and ethical standards, which in turn produces the breaking up of homes, juvenile crime, gambling, drunkenness and acts of violence. These are a few examples of the threatening menaces confronting Christian workers in the world. Our first reaction is to cry out, "Who is sufficient for these things?" You would have expected the Lord to have taken steps to shield His followers from the danger of wolves, serpents and scorpions. You may even have thought that He would have advised them to play safe, to keep within the shelter of the fold and not to venture forth among the ravenous beasts. But contrary to all expectations, our Lord, having issued the warning about the wolves, serpents and scorpions, proceeds emphatically to say, "Behold, I send you forth." But how can we go when we feel so weak and inadequate? The answer is that Christ supplies the power.

Might of the Mission

Instead of a life of safe isolation in a monastery cell, or within the religious program of the Sanctuary, or behind the confines of a good Christian home, Jesus sends us forth to witness for Him in an unregenerate world of men. To prove successful in this great venture of missionary faith, we must understand the meaning of the Lord's promise in verse 19, "Behold, I give you power to tread on serpents, and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you." The work must be undertaken in the realization of the Divine dynamic. We are not sent forth in the interest of a defeated cause, but in the power of Christ's resurrections He who conquered evil, death and the grave, lives after the power of an endless life. This power is available for our everyday use, and it is only as and when we use it that we can be more than conquerors for Christ and His Church. The Reformers of old suspected special days of religious observance within the Church calendar, such as Easter and Christmas and Pentecost, because of a tendency among so many church members to remember the practical meaning only on that special day. How absurd it would be, and how impractical and inconvenient, if we decided only to use electricity in our homes on Farraday's birthday. And yet how prone we are to adopt that attitude in our use of the Divine power. Success is only possible as we rely constantly upon the power of God's Spirit.

A minister called one day at an olated farmhouse. The lady of the ouse was a bit agitated because the me appeared to be in chaos. Elec-icians were boring holes in walls ad ceilings, and laying cables, flexes ed fittings.

The minister, sensing that the call as inopportune, hurried discreetly way, promising to call soon again. bout a month later he revisited the d farmhouse and saw a tremendous ansformation. The power was laid . and there was light and heat verywhere. There was light in the ep cellar below and in the living om, and also in the bedrooms above. his can have effect upon us in our wn personal lives. The power is vailable and is ready to be laid on. t let's remember that the process necessarily a painful one. It will volve boring through the walls of e flesh and drilling beneath the ately room of the will. Neverthe-ss, it is absolutely essential to the uccess of the mission, for there can e no blessing without the power of e Spirit. Man is a trichotomy. He eeds this power in the cellar of the motions and desires. He needs it in he living room of the mind and the ill. He needs it in the upper story f the spirit, whereby he is enabled hold communion and fellowship ith God and with His Son, Jesus hrist. The Christian missioner must e in tune, and in harmony with the finite God. This enables him to be power for good and for God in the world. The Spirit of God can create for us clear and illumined minds, warm hearts and powerful lives.

Music of the Mission

The 70 returned, we read, with great joy. The cause of jubilation was their own success, as a result of using the Divine power promised to them. This merriment at the fall of Satan and his kingdom savoured of pride and selfish pleasure. This tendency in the disciples to gloat gleefully over the downfall of their enemies was not truly Christian in nature and called for a reprimand from the Lord Himself. Don't call attention to the wonders you have performed, the good works you have accomplished, the years of service you have rendered, and the number of hellish demons you have been able to exorcise. "Rejoice not," said our Lord, "that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven." The true music of the mission is the joy that is recorded in heaven over sinners who return in repentance. But our Lord acquaints His disciples of the supreme and final cause of joy and delight, namely, the joy of knowing that their names are indelibly inscribed in God's records. The earthly roll of honor is temporal in character and even Westminster Abbey must some day crumble into dust. But with the hymnwriter the Christian can sing, "My name from the palms of His hands, eternity cannot erase."

BELIEVE

William McLeister, II, Beverly Heights United Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh, Pa.

Scripture Reading: Hebrews 11:1-12.

Just what place does faith hold in ur lives? What is its relationship to nowledge and to the other areas of he Christian life? As I sought guid-nce for a text, I found that my mind nd my heart were led to the great eleventh chapter of the book of Hebrews — this outstanding portion of God's Word which has been called by some "the Westminster Abbey of the Biblical heroes of faith." You cannot read this eleventh chapter of He-

brews without coming to the conclusion that faith plays a most important part in the entire Chritsian life.

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." The Phillips translation, which gives us a fresh rendering of this well-known passage, puts it this way: "Now faith means putting our full confidence in the things we hope for. It means being certain of things which we cannot see."

I

Faith occupies an initial place in our whole Christian concept. "Without faith," the writer of this book of Hebrews says, "we cannot please God." If a person is to come unto God and have faith, he must believe two things. First, that God exists, says the writer of Hebrews, and second, that God is the rewarder of those who diligently seek after Him.

Recently while riding into town with one of our college students, our conversation centered in a professed atheist who was a professor of zoology at this freshman's institution of higher learning. This student recalled that in a conversation with the professor, the professor had pointed out that his faith was in matter, in the laws which govern matter, and in the evolutionary process whereby these laws were working out in all relationships of the universe, and that, therefore, faith, as far as he was concerned, was purely superfluous. If some people found it helpful to give them confidence, it was all right by him; but he would have no part of it, or in it; he would rest his faith, his trust, his confidence in the natural laws of this universe.

College students especially during their first year in schools of higher learning, are finding their faith under fire. Many of the Christian teachings which they received in our Christian education program, which we believe is excellent and outstanding, are being questioned and are being subjected to doubt. It is important, therefore, that these students, and all of us, have the proper concept of the part which faith plays in the Christian life.

William Courtney, writing in a book on the Apostles Creed entitled "I Believe—But," points out that too many professing Christians in the Church today have mental reservations attached to their creeds. They will say, "I believe in God the Father Almighty—but," and then add their mental reservations. "I believe in Jesus Christ, born of the Virgin Mary—but," and then comes the mental or spoken reservation. This distinguished minister points out that you cannot build a Christian Church in the boggy marshes of that kind of theological reservations, but rather you must have a solid foundation on which to construct a Christian faith.

He also points out that the very concept of faith today is an irritant to twentieth century people in intellectual realms. Many are allergic to it. They look upon faith as a kind of a beautiful myth or ideal that may have been satisfactory for our ancestors, but now in the age of scientific methods, in the age in which man through his intellectual brilliance has probed matter, this business of faith is no longer needed. Man will stand upon his own achievements, upon his own insight, and his own ability to know.

Jokingly, modern man says that the Church of Christ is like Columbus. It goes out not knowing where it goes, and when it arrives it does not know where it is, and when it returns home it does not know where it was —and it does all this on some one else's money! Well, that's a rather clever statement, but it doesn't stand up because if you analyze the expedition of Columbus from Spain to the Western Hemisphere you find that actually faith was the factor that enabled him to achieve his objective. He had certain knowledge, we grant that. He had studied his geography

e had studied navigation, and he ad projected a theory that if one ould sail to the west from Europe e would encounter a new continent. e gathered about him a group of iends—fellow sailors—many of whom new nothing of his geography or his eories of navigation, but they had ith in him. They believed that his eories would work and so they com- itted themselves to that perilous rney. The knowledge of Colum- s, had it not been coupled with ith, I'm sure would never have ken those ships out of the Spanish rbor. It was the primacy of faith at enabled that man to put his owledge into action, to launch out on the seas and to make his great scovery.

The same thing is true in the sci- ntific realm. The advance of knowl- dge from those things which are own to what we surmise is through e process of faith. A scientist must ave faith or he would never uncover e secret of God's creation. Faraday, e great Christian scientist, is said to ave addressed his friends in the lab- ratory by saying, "Gentlemen, re- ove your hats, I am now about to sk God a question." This was his ay of announcing the beginning of scientific experiment.

Dr. Earnest Ligon of Union Col- ge goes even farther than did Fara- ay. Ligon says that scientific experi- ent is, in effect, the same as prayer. When the scientist comes into touch with the secrets of God's created world, says Dr. Ligon, he is just as much in prayer as the theologian upon his knees petitioning God. There you have the primacy of faith.

II

Let us move on and in the second place think of the foundation which faith plays in all of life's relation- hips. Our whole capitalistic, econom- c system is founded on relationships of faith. If we did not have faith, we ould not have contracts, we could ot have banks, we could not have loans, we could not have a credit system, and we could not have courts. Our whole democracy is established upon the foundation of faith.

Take as another illustration, the marriage relationship — this holiest of human relationships. When a young man and a young woman stand at these chancel steps and pledge their troth to each other, they don't know too much about one another. Each may think he knows the other, but each has a lot to learn. However, they are willing to launch out on the sea of matrimony by faith — and that takes real faith! The whole relation- ship of marriage is built upon faith.

Friendship is established upon the relationship of faith. A man is only as strong as his friends. What is friend- ship? It is simply the faith which you have in your friends that they have faith in you.

Even a funeral service is founded upon faith. When I stand with a fam- ily in that sorrowing hour beside an open grave in a cemetery, as the final remains of a loved one are returned to the earth, it is with faith that we look into that grave and realize that this is not the end of that human relation- ship, but rather we hear ringing in our ears and in our hearts the words of that One who said, "I am the res- urrection and the life: he that be- lieveth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liv- eth and believeth in me shall never die." Without faith, the writer of He- brews says, it is impossible to please God.

Someone has pointed out that a very respectable history of the Church could be written simply on the shades of meaning and association given to the word "faith." This is a key word in the history of the Christian Church. Obviously there are vast differences of meanings attached to the word "faith." It is one thing to say that I have faith that with the peaceful re- lease of atomic energy there will oc- cur an industrial revolution greater

than anything the world has seen, but it is quite another thing to stand up and say, "I believe . . . in Jesus Christ . . . born of the Virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, dead, and buried . . . On the third day he arose from the dead." There is a great difference between those two professions of faith, yet they have something in common.

What we need, therefore, is to realize that there has to be, in effect, an evolution of faith, a passing from a lower level to a higher level. When you were a child you had a rather innate faith in the world. You didn't question the law of gravity and you didn't question your parents. You simply took life as it came and accepted it at its face value with a rather simple, natural faith. Then as you grew older, and you began to go to school and to learn about this natural world in which we live, you entered what we might call an informed faith. You began to learn what makes this sphere on which we dwell revolve once every twenty-four hours. You learned that this whirling planet is tilted at a certain angle in relationship to the sun and, therefore, we have the regularity of the seasons in the temperate zone. You learned what the law of gravity meant, and the more you learned about this natural universe in which we live the more you had indications of the greatness of God's hand behind it all.

Knowledge and faith are not incompatible, but they should be related one to another. The more you learn, the more your faith should grow. It is a wrong assumption of the modern generation that people of great intellectual achievement cannot stoop to the level of faith. Instead, your faith should grow with your knowledge.

However, having this informed faith is not enough. There must be a third step in this development from the foundation. This we may call a received faith. You must, somewhere along the road, encounter something greater than the universe, greater than nature. You must encounter the supernatural if your faith is to become the faith of the New Testament. You must meet Jesus Christ along the way. When that happens these lower levels of faith will be confirmed, but you will realize that you have entered a new and higher relationship. You will realize that there enters into your life an element, a new dimension, which could never be found in all the searching which you have made into the knowledge of this world.

The study of philosophy is a good discipline to the college student inasmuch as it should teach him, if nothing else, that man by searching will never find God. My undergraduate major was in philosophy. I loved philosophy, and I studied every bit of it that I could get my hands on. Immanuel Kant's "Critique of Pure Reason" is a great discipline for the mind, but as you read that great German philosopher's writings you realize that he falls short as did all the rest.

As we study philosophy we realize that logical reasoning alone can never take us all the way to a knowledge of God. There must be an inductive leap in the process. Somewhere you must step out blindly if you are to find God and this is what we mean by the faith of the New Testament – the faith whereby a person throws himself into the open arms of Jesus Christ. In that step of faith he becomes a twice-born person; he becomes regenerated; he becomes a new creature.

III

However it is not enough to reach even that point in our beliefs. We must also have a faith that is constantly growing. One of the tragic things which a pastor sees, all too frequently, is the fading of a student's Christian faith. This young person went out to college with great

al for the things of Christ, with a rant living faith and a great wit-ss and testimony, and then under e deluge of higher learning with of its doubts, that young mind gins to question the things which re accepted at face value as part God's revelation. I say it is a tragic ing, but it's happening all the time. e great Tempter baits his traps d rallies and rejoices in the thought getting professing Christians to glect the growth of their faith.

Take, for example, the realm of ading the Bible. As soon as you be-n to neglect your devotional study God's Word, you will find that ubts begin to creep into your mind. u are not aware of their source, t slowly they begin to grow and wly they begin to contaminate ur Christian faith. If you find doubt ginning to come into your life, I ggest that you check on your devo-nal reading of the Bible and your ayer life. The great Tempter likes get Christians to doubt God's ord and so we find, again and gain, especially in institutions of gher learning, those who attempt to dermine the Christian teachings of e Church regarding the Bible.

Some pundit has said that the Cath-c Church keeps the Bible from its embership but the Protestant hurch doesn't have to. We simply glect the Bible. If you let the weeks d the months, and perhaps a year, ss without opening God's Word and ading it for yourself, you can ex-ct doubts to mar your Christian ith. I plead with all of you, col-ge students and adults alike, to ad God's Word faithfully because is through the Word of God that u will grow in your faith and de-lop and become more mature Chris-ans. Listen to what God's Apostle ys, "For we continue to share in all at Christ has for us so long as we eadily maintain until the end the ust with which we began." We must ow in our faith. We must go on.

An Eskimo who served nobly in an Arctic expedition was taken to New York City from Greenland as a reward for his fine services as a guide. For the first time this simple Eskimo saw the skyscrapers of New York, rode in the subway, went to the movies, saw television, and heard the radio. He returned to his people and told them about these great buildings which were like mountains and the canyons which men called streets. He told how people rode in trains which traveled like the reindeer. The more he told, the more solemn his listeners became until finally most of them got up and left. They gave him a new name which stuck with him to the end of his days. He was called "The Liar." The disbelief on the part of his fellow Eskimos did not disprove the truth of New York City and its wonders to a simple visitor from a far off primitive place.

People will question your Christian faith. As you give witness to the things Christ means to you and has done for you, people will look at you in scorn and call you "The Liar" — or will indicate the same thing in other terminology. Do not let this deter you, because this is simply another proof of the truth of God's Word which says that in the latter days there will be those who will disbelieve all of the great truths of this Bible and will attempt to tear down the faith of those who believe it. Cling to your faith, hold on to it; and may it be to you a precious possession, because it is the greatest thing you have in this world or in the next.

If we were to paraphrase, with Paul's permission, his great hymn of love from First Corinthians, the thirteenth chapter, we might say: "And now abideth fame, fortune, and faith, but the greatest of these is faith." Don't lose your faith to gain fame or to gain fortune, because your faith is worth infinitely more than anything else that this life has to give. "Be

ready at any time to give a quiet and reverent answer to any man who wants a reason for the hope you have within you." Thus wrote Peter. May each of us have such a strong faith that he can give a quiet and reverent answer, in lip and in life, to any one at any time.

THE DIMENSIONS OF CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP

John W. Meister, First Presbyterian Church, Fort Wayne, Indiana

The great evangelist, Dwight L. Moody, once said that while Columbus discovered America he really didn't know much about America. He knew nothing, for example, of the Mississippi River, the West Coast, the prairies and mountains and plains. He knew nothing of the people who roamed these inner areas of our land. And, of course, he knew nothing of the greatness which beckoned the nation destined to be born upon the new continent.

In something of the same way, a Christian may discover Christ and still not know much about him. He may discover Christ as a profound Teacher and know nothing about him as a Saviour. He may discover Christ as part of the inherited culture of his family and friends and know nothing about Him as a personal Companion in the experiences of life. He may discover Christ as something of a superstition and know nothing about him as the hard reality we call Truth.

The Christian who stops growing spiritually the moment he first discovers Christ misses the real joy of the Christian life. He misses as much in this area as Columbus missed in his by not being privileged to explore all parts of his new world.

The Christian life is just that — a life! And the alert Christian is one **who encourages the new life in him** to all the growth that is possible.

Something like this must have been in our Lord's mind during the conversation reported by John. "Jesus then said to the Jews who had believed in him, "If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free."

I

Notice that he clearly recognized the beginning of the Christian life, the end of the Christian life, and the all-important middle ground of exploration and discovery in between.

He spoke to those "who had believed in him." This is the beginning of the Christian life. This is the initial, Columbus-like discovery — to find One who can be believed on the things that matter. Some years ago an editorial in "Fortune" magazine was speaking about a spiral down which the men of this generation are tempted to sink. The writer said, 'There is only one way out of this spiral. The way out is the sound of a voice, not our voice but a voice coming from something not ourselves, in the existence of which we cannot disbelieve . . . Without (that) we are no more capable of saving the world than we were capable of creating it in the first place."

Surely the starting place for the quality of life that transforms existence into living is to find someone who can be believed as regards the things that matter. That is to say, to find someone who can speak the authoritative word about God, who can confront us with the terrifying word about sin, and who can enact for us the redeeming word about forgiveness — that act which erases the terror of sin and writes large the love of God.

II

If this is the starting place of the Christian life, then Jesus made equal-

lear the end of the Christian life. said, You will know the truth and truth will make you free."

twentieth century temptation is peak of truth as the highest and mate good. We often say, as a ter of fact, The truth will make free." But Jesus here reminds us an essential limitation. He says, u will know the truth and the h will make you free." If we do know the truth it can hardly be instrument for our use. Indeed, as contemporary billboard posters ind us, "What we don't know will us."

ut Jesus here sharpens up the real ure of truth as means to some- g greater and not as an end in lf. "The truth will make you free." s is the end result and purpose of Christian life — freedom. When follow Christ completely enough are free from fear. If this world ny father's house, then there is more room for fear anywhere in universe than there is for fear in parents' home. When we follow rist completely enough, we are free m self. It is possible in this life each the stage of spiritual devel- ent which Paul reached when he , "For me to live is Christ." I say not with the suggestion that any s has reached that stage but to d the note of hope that if a man weak as Paul could arrive so far g the Christ road, then we too reach the same place. And I say o hold out the further assurance our destiny in the life to come o reach the fullness of the stature hrist himself. Insofar as we know rist and obey him, that far we are from self.

gain, this fredom which is the end the Christian life frees us from ery to other people. H. G. Wells e said that the voice of our neigh- s sounds louder in our ears than voice of God. This clamour of r people's voices will not hold us ondage if we hear the voice of Christ. We shall be as courageous as Luther when he said: "Here stand I. God helping me, I can do no other."

Best of all, this freedom frees us from death. To the degree that we find eternal life in Christ, to that degree death has already been made captive and we are victors over the spectre.

III

So much for the beginning and the end of the Christian life. What about the middle ground? Listen now to the full text: "Jesus then said to (those) who had believed in him, 'If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.'"

"If you continue in my Word . . . " This is where the largest part of the Christian life is lived — not at the beginning when we first find one whom we can trust on the ultimate matters and not at the end when we find this promised freedom, for even that is a growing thing. But we live our days "continuing" in his word — abiding in him, living with him.

This continuing refers to the exploratory and discovering nature of the Christian life. If we continue with our Lord we will listen for what he has to say. We shall study the Scriptures, not with an idle curiosity, but with a concerned personal fascination: "What is he saying to me?" We shall listen to the still, small voice within, and we shall seek to separate what we want to hear from what we really hear. And once we listen we shall linger with the words we hear. They will not let us go. So they become our meat night and day and we try to discover what they mean for our life here and now. So that as we learn by listening and lingering so we shall be led by him.

St. Paul once reminded us that the Christian life is like a race, and he prayed that he would cross the finish line in triumphant fashion. A race is not won at the starting post only or at the finish line only. The ground in

between must be covered. May God help us traverse this necessary in- between land!

WORTH QUOTING

E. Paul Hovey, The Federated Churches, Lewiston, Idaho

The fate of the world rests on the mastery of things.—William Barrett.

* * *

Love of the brethren can never be a means to some ulterior purpose. It is self authenticating. It has its own validity and it should not be judged in terms of the conversions to Jesus Christ it may or may not produce. But it can often be that the right to speak, even the invitation to speak, may be given to those who have proved their love of the world through the sharing of suffering.—**Theology for Evangelism** (World Council of Churches.)

* * *

The Christian faith delivers one not out of, but into, the world. Elijah sought God out in the wilderness. God sent him back into the world. This is the world which God entered in Christ in order to redeem it; it is the world which He has made; and it is the world in which we are to live out our response to His activity.
—Benjamin A. Reist.

Christianity can be made verbal an visible to the world; we need to ide tify ourselves with the world and i needs.—John S. Hadsell.

* * *

I present Christianity to you n as an investment but as an adve ture, not for what it offers you b for what it requires of you, not as guarantee of life here and hereafte but as a challenge to take your stan now with the Divine Captain on th divine side of the age old struggl between right and wrong, truth an falsehood, good and evil, the spir and the flesh. Christ is still leadin His followers out on daring an sometimes dangerous enterprises, still setting them hard tasks, facin them with perplexing problem matching them against apparently s perior odds . . . it is to adventure H calls you.—Robert J. McCracken.

* * *

The obvious is that which is nev seen until someone expresses it sim ply.—Kahil Gibran.

BOOKS FOR PULPIT PREACHING . . . . from page 2

(Harper & Brothers, 16 pp., $2.75.)

Two worthy books center in the perennially-significant subject of Christian marriage. **Human Nature and Christian Marriage** by William P. Wylie is an interpretation of the varied facets of love's fulfillment in marriage, written with simplicity and sensitivity and more especially for young people who want a frank and convincing presentation of the Christian perspective regarding sex, love and marriage. (Association Press, 128 pp., $2.50.) **A Christian Interpretation of Marriage** by Henry A. Bow man, professor of sociology at th University of Texas, is a summatio and commentary on the biblical co ceptions and teachings regarding s and marriage and emphasizing th teaching of Jesus and early churc men. Chapters on the Christian we ding ceremony and on interfaith ma riage are illuminating, and appe dixes, which include discussion que tions and topics, are useful for gro work. (Westminster Press, 127 p $2.50.)